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ABSTRACT

The guide, developed by the Secondary Transition and Employment Project (STEP) in Idaho, is intended to help students with mild handicaps develop job related social skills. The STEP social skills program requires: (1) identifying those skills which are considered important or socially useful by significant others; (2) clearly defining the cognitive and performance components of each skills; (3) accurately assessing skill competence; (4) developing intervention strategies which maximize skill generalization and maintenance. Chapter 1 discusses social competence on the job, while chapter 2 identifies critical vocational social skills including social perception and problem solving skills, generic work-related skills, and job-specific social skills. The third chapter looks at the assessment of vocational social skills and details the 7-step assessment process including obtaining teacher, employer, parent, and student assessment. A community validation checklist of 22 job-related social skills is provided. An assessment videotape is also available. Chapter 4 focuses on intervention strategies and offers a model for teaching generic social skills which is illustrated in sample lesson plans for the skills of asking for help and controlling anger and stress. Appended is an article entitled "Teaching Community-Validated Job-Related Social Skills to Secondary Students with Mild Handicaps: Assessment Strategies." Also appended is a sample job skill inventory. (DB)

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ASSESSING & TEACHING JOB RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

A CURRICULUM MANUAL FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD HANDICAPS

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SOCIAL SKILLS

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ASSESSING AND TEACHING
JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Strategies for Students with Mild Handicaps

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CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL COMPETENCE ON THE JOB

What is Social Competence?

Social competence is the ability to effectively interact with others in the environment. This is a complex process which involves a variety of cognitive abilities such as perceiving and discriminating among environmental cues, processing information, predicting consequences, empathizing with others, and adjusting responses based on often subtle changes in situations and on verbal and nonverbal feedback from others. Social competence also requires the fluent performance of a number of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as maintaining a comfortable distance from others, using appropriate gestures and facial expressions, and giving the customary, or expected, response in an interaction.

The importance of personal-social skills in the adjustment of individuals with handicaps has long been recognized. Adults with mental retardation or a learning disability may have acquired adequate basic self-help and academic skills and yet lead lonely, unhappy lives if their social skills are deficient.

There is substantial evidence, unfortunately, that persons with handicaps have difficulty in interpersonal functioning which affects their adjustment in school, community, leisure, and vocational settings. Researchers have found, for example, that learning disabled students are more likely to engage in antisocial actions and that they participate in fewer activities and have less social involvement than their nonhandicapped peers, with the severity of problem behaviors increasing in adolescence.

Social skills training, then, should be a high priority in any program designed to effectively teach people to function successfully at home, in the community, and on the job. Social competence fosters integration with nonhandicapped individuals; it allows access to community environments where essential independent living skills and vocational skills can be learned; and it may ultimately lead to better personal adjustment by increasing independence and reducing passivity and isolation.

Social Skills Deficits on the Job

As employment becomes a major objective of special education programming for students with handicaps, researchers are increasingly interested in the relationship between social competence and the ability to obtain and maintain competitive employment. Results of recent studies indicate that students with mild handicaps exhibit a variety of social skill deficits which differentiate them from nonhandicapped students and which may affect their adjustment in the workplace. For example, Schumaker, Hazel, Sherman, & Sheldon (1982) found that performance differences can be demonstrated between students labeled learning disabled and those labeled non-learning disabled on seven of eight general social skills: giving positive feedback, giving negative feedback, accepting negative feedback, resisting peer pressure, negotiating conflict situations, conversation, and personal problem solving. In an earlier study, learning disabled students also performed significantly worse than nonhandicapped students on four of ten work-related social skills, including participating in a job interview, accepting criticism from an employer, giving criticism to a coworker, and explaining a problem to an employer.

In a number of studies, employers have identified several behaviors exhibited by persons with handicaps which appear to be related to failure in employment. These include:

Noncompliance with supervisors
Tardiness and poor attendance
Maladaptive or inappropriate behaviors
Poor relationships with peers and supervisors
Inappropriate verbal responses or conversations
Poor motivation
Not listening to the boss
Fighting
Stealing
Nosiness
Lack of self-control
Failure to follow directions

It also appears that job supervisors are more intolerant of social skill inadequacies than task performance inadequacies: specific job performance skills are perceived as less important than getting along with people, coping with stress under pressure, showing enthusiasm for the job, dependability, and communicating with the public. However, employers tend to value some social skills more than others: those which affect worker productivity (such as asking for help, following directions, responding to criticism, getting information before starting a job, and offering to help coworkers) are rated higher than such personal social behaviors as listening without interrupting and expressing appreciation to coworkers.

Enhancing Social Competence on the Job

Several strategies have emerged in assisting students with handicaps to develop the social skills needed to function in the workplace or to ensure that they are placed on sites which do not require the skills they lack. The approach, or combination of approaches, which should prove most helpful for a student will depend on the nature of the student's problems and the resources which are available to him or her. Some of the strategies include:

1. Changing the Environment

The behavior of individuals in social contexts is interrelated. Successful integration may require interventions that change the environment and the behavior of others in the environment as well as the individual. Research suggests that structured contacts between individuals with handicaps and those without handicaps seems to be the most consistent method of effecting a positive attitude change. Media presentations are also effective in conveying information about persons with handicaps and in reducing the discomfort that nonhandicapped individuals may have in their interactions with them. In practice, changing the environmental climate in a work setting may involve preparing an employer and coworkers to work with a student with handicaps by presenting accurate information about his or her strengths and difficulties and also providing opportunities for the employer and coworkers to interact with the student prior to the student's actual placement on the job.

2. Matching the Individual to the Environment

Recent studies indicate that the successful adjustment of persons with handicaps to the environment is related to setting-specific performance requirements as well as person-specific capabilities. One way to decrease the high unemployment rate of persons with handicaps is to assure a better match between the worker and the job by carefully looking at the work performance skills and social-interpersonal skills required for a specific job at a particular worksite. A problem with this approach is that it is difficult to accurately measure the attitudes of those who will work with the handicapped person on the site and the even more difficult to identify the performance requirements of specific work environments, as they are often nebulous and subject to change.

3. Establishing Social Support Networks

Another approach to enhancing the social competence of students with handicaps in employment settings is to help them establish social support networks on the job. In a review of studies examining the role of peers in the successful adjustment of mentally retarded adults, Romer and Heller (1983) found that individuals with more peer contact were

more likely to remain in the community, transfer to less restrictive settings, demonstrate independence in self-care, earn more money, and transfer out of sheltered workshops into less restrictive employment settings. Thus a support network seems critical to maintaining remunerative and satisfying employment in the community.

4. Changing the Individual

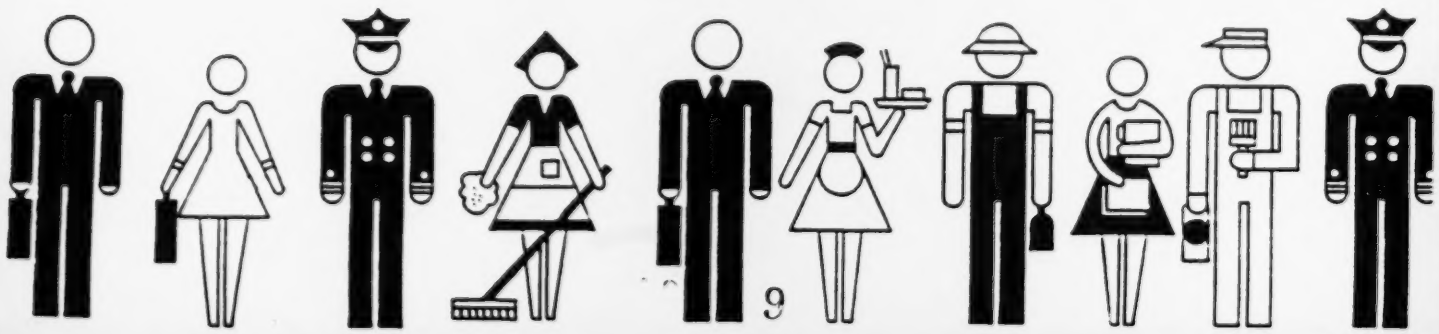
The emphasis of most intervention programs to date has been on changing the behavior of individuals with handicaps rather than changing environmental variables. Individual training in social skills has been frequently cited as a means of enhancing prospects for gaining and retaining employment. Unfortunately, many skills training programs fail to establish that the skills they teach are those valued by employers. They overlook the need to individually assess students prior to instruction, and they restrict instruction to classroom settings, assuming that generalization to the work environment will automatically occur.

The STEP Social Skills Program

The focus of this manual is on developing and implementing intervention programs designed to enhance social competence through individual programming. Given the wide range of interpersonal skills which may be required of students with handicaps in work settings, effective programming requires:

* Identifying those skills which are considered important or socially useful by significant others.
* Clearly defining the cognitive and performance components of each skill.
* Accurately assessing skill competence.
* Developing intervention strategies which maximize skill generalization and maintenance.

This manual addresses each of these issues and presents strategies which have been field tested with secondary students with mild handicaps in a variety of school and community based vocational programs.



CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFYING CRITICAL VOCATIONAL SOCIAL SKILLS

Which social skills do students need to function successfully in work environments? Effective intervention programs for students with handicaps should address three basic areas: social perception and social problem solving skills; generic work-related social skills; and job-specific social skills.

Social Perception and Problem Solving Skills

First, to the extent they are able, students need to develop social perception and social problem solving skills. Ideally, instruction in cognitive perception and problem solving skills begins early and is an important part of any longitudinal programming for students with handicaps. These skills should be incorporated into all areas of the curriculum, including social skills instruction.

Social perception skills include the ability to receive verbal and nonverbal cues from the environment and to associate them with previous experiences; the ability to empathize with others; and the ability to predict what will happen in a social context and to adjust behavior in response to feedback from others. Social problem-solving skills include determining what the problem is, generating a number of possible solutions, predicting consequences, choosing and acting on an appropriate solution, evaluating outcomes, and choosing an alternative solution if necessary.

Generic Work-Related Skills

In addition to basic cognitive perception and problem solving skills, students need to develop a number of generic work-related social skills which are required by most work settings. These skills can be successfully taught using a combination of school and community based training provided the skills selected are perceived as important by employers, students are carefully assessed for strengths and deficits, and activites are planned to facilitate generalization to other settings.

In selecting generic social skills, it is essential to determine just which skills are important to employers. There is little evidence that the skills selected for assessment and training in many programs are actually validated as those needed for effective functioning in social interactions. This absence of social validity data may result in social skills instruction which fails to teach any critical interpersonal

skills or which teaches only those skills needed in a special education setting.

Surveying employers to determine which social skills they consider essential for obtaining and maintaining employment provides a measure of social validity for an intervention program. In 1985, the Secondary Transition and Employment Project (STEP) interviewed 67 employers in representative local businesses about the skills they perceived as essential for all entry-level employees. Eleven skills were rated by employers as critical: being honest, accepting and following instructions, maintaining good personal hygiene, controlling anger and stress, explaining problems and asking for help, showing interest in the job, working cooperatively, choosing appropriate work clothes, accepting criticism, accepting changes in work assignments and schedules, and saving personal business for after work. The information obtained from the survey supports the findings of other researchers who have investigated the issue of social validity and whose studies are summarized in the article contained in Appendix A. As a result of these studies, several generic work-related social skills have been identified as critical by those persons directly involved in evaluating social competence in the workplace- that is, employers and work supervisors.

Job-Specific Social Skills

A third category of social skills is job-specific skills. These are interpersonal skills which are demanded by a specific work setting but may not be ones most employers would identify as important. A survey of community employers can yield information about the relative importance of a number of general interpersonal skills. For example, asking for help is perceived as very important in employer surveys, while complimenting others is seen as less critical. However, a survey can not delineate the specific competencies required in a particular work environment and their importance to the employer or supervisor. For example, a day care center used as a training site by STEP requires employees to spend several minutes talking with the parents of preschoolers each day about their children's activities. The importance of initiating and maintaining a conversation on this site would not be known without at least interviewing the employer.

While talking with an employer is helpful, a more systematic approach to identifying critical job-specific social skills would be to conduct an inventory of the work site. The inventory process yields important information, not only about which skills are assigned a high priority by an individual employer, but also about which skills are more likely to be required by a particular work setting. For example, while the ability to compliment others may not critical for a student working independently at custodial tasks, it is an essential skill for a student employed as a sales clerk at a clothing store. With the inventory process, the person designing a social skills intervention program for a student on a specific job site actually observes competent employees at

the site and records information about the social skills required to carry out the activites typically performed on the job. Information about situational factors which may affect performance (for instance, at one site the supervisor's inaccessibility means that when a problem arises, someone else must be approached for help) and the level of fluency demanded by the job (for example, at another site employees are expected to be consistently polite to customers, regardless of provocation) can also be observed and recorded.

This manual will deal with strategies for identifying, assessing and teaching generic work-related social skills. Information about the ecological inventory approach to social skills programming can be obtained from the STEP Project. A sample inventory which combines both social skills and work skills required by a specific job is contained in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSING VOCATIONAL SOCIAL SKILLS

Assessment Issues

It appears that no single assessment device currently available is comprehensive enough to serve as a basis for a social skills intervention program. The assessment process is complicated by the need to look at a wide variety of skills, some generic, but others very specific to a particular job. Another difficulty lies in accurately delineating and measuring the components of a skill and deciding what constitutes acceptable performance. Finally, there is the problem of determining whether a student does not perform a skill as required because he or she does not know how or if other factors- personal or situational- are inhibiting performance. The effect of situational factors should be taken into account when assessing social skills. Students who can competently perform a skill in one setting may have difficulty in other circumstances. Because the intervention strategies for a skill deficit (such as perception training, modeling and verbal rehearsal) differ from approaches useful for treating performance deficits (such as anxiety reduction, self-esteem enhancement and self-control techniques) it is critical to develop an assessment procedure which differentiates between the two.

Several assessment techniques are currently used in assessing social skills and each has its limitations. Behavioral checklists are easy to use, nonreactive, and can be designed to measure the use of cognitive skills (such as problem solving) and the quality of responses; however they do not yield socially valid information about whether skill performance results in acceptance by others. Sociometric devices and rating scales provide social validity but do not measure the specific components of skill performance. Self-report and simulated interactions are useful in assessing whether a social skill exists at all in a student's repertoire; however, actual measures of skill performance in natural environments are required to determine whether a performance deficit exists and under what circumstances performance is inhibited. Naturalistic observation across settings can yield important information about whether social incompetence results from cognitive deficits or performance inhibititon due to situational factors.

Of the possible assessment techniques which can be used, two appear to be particularly useful. One is to directly observe the student in a number of environments where selected social skills typically should be performed. This strategy can differentiate between performance and skill deficits and can target specific activities and environments in

which assistance is needed. Unfortunately, this approach is very time-consuming as it depends on the natural occurence of a situation which requires the student to perform the targeted skill; however, contrived situations can be designed to offset this disadvantage. Another disadvantage of direct observation is that skill performance may be influenced by the presence of the observer; covert observation may be used to circumvent this problem.

A second useful approach to assessment is collecting information from a variety of people who are in a position to regularly observe a student's performance on selected skills. This strategy is time-efficient, is supported by research on anecdotal assessment procedures, can potentially differentiate between skill and performance deficits, and can target activities and environments which, and people with whom, a student is having difficulties. In collecting information, it is a good idea to ask students to evaluate themselves as well. Self-reports are a useful technique for adolescents because it allows them to describe their perceptions of their performance and to participate in planning their programs. However, whether students with mild handicaps can <u>accurately</u> evaluate what social skills they are having problems with has not been clearly established.

A comprehensive assessment, then, should use a variety of techniques to provide a clear picture of an individual student's strengths and deficits. The assessment process should:

1. Identify a set of general social skills perceived by community employers as essential.
2. Ask the student, the parent or caregiver, the school work supervisor, and the employer (if the student is working) to evaluate the student's performance on skills identified by community employers as essential.
3. Assess job-related social skills deficits specific to the student's work setting using naturalistic observation and an inventory of the job site.
4. For those skills identified as deficient, determine whether the skill can be performed at all. If not, cognitive deficits exist.
5. For those skills which the student can perform but does not perform consistently, delineate the conditions under which the skill is performed.
6. For those skills targeted for intervention, obtain information about the quality of skill as it is currently performed and the criteria for adequate performance in situations of concern.
7. After intervention, measure training outcomes in terms of whether the student can, in new situations, perform skills on which he or she has been trained and whether the student is perceived by employers, work supervisors and others as more competent in the performance of identified skills as a result of instruction.

The Development of the STEP Checklist

The social skills curriculum presented in this manual has been developed to assess and teach generic work-related social skills and is designed for students with mild handicaps. Information about the development, validation and use of the assessment checklist and accompanying video stems is summarized below. Specific information about the theoretical basis of the instrument is contained in Appendix A.

How were essential generic work-related social skills identified and validated?

A survey questionnaire was prepared which contained twenty-one skills identified in the literature as critical to maintaining employment. One hundred local employers were surveyed using the questionnaire to determine which social skills they perceived to be essential for employment in entry-level jobs. The survey included employers who were providing work observation or job training experiences for students with handicaps and employers who hire for entry level positions in careers in which students with handicaps typically work after leaving school, including food service, custodial, and clerical occupations.

Employers were sent the survey questionnaire and asked to assign a priority to each skill according to how critical they believed it to be for entry-level employees. Employers were also asked to list any additional skills they felt were essential for maintaining entry-level employment and to indicate in general terms their reasons for terminating employees who had been let go during the past year. Eleven skills were identified as critical by at least 57% of those employers.

Assessment checklists were developed based on the results of the community survey, with critical skills presented in order of importance, depending on the frequency with which each was cited as essential by employers. The checklists were field tested and revised as a result of feedback from students, employers, teachers, and parents.

How does the assessment process differentiate between skill deficits and performance problems?

A videotape was prepared consisting of 3 scenarios (Levels 1,2, and 3) for each of the 11 targeted skills. Level One scenarios portray middle school or junior high students involved in straightforward work situations requiring the performance of social skills; Level Two portray senior high students in more complex job-related situations, and Level Three features even more difficult situations faced by senior high students on jobs. The videotaped scenarios present a problem situation and then fade out so that the student is required to show or tell what the employee should do to keep his or her job. Acceptable responses to

the scenarios (which have been validated by employers and work supervisors) are recorded on the scenario summary sheet for reference. A student's inability to show or tell what the employee in the scenario should do suggests instruction in the skill, using techniques such as modeling, direct instruction and roleplaying with feedback. On the other hand, a student who reportedly has difficulty with a skill but who can appropriately use the skill in response to a videotaped scenario likely will require an entirely different intervention program: rather than simply teaching the skill, the instructor will focus on techniques which foster the performance of the skill in the settings where it is required.

Using the STEP assessment process

The assessment process involves collecting data from a number of sources in order to determine the skills which should be targeted for intervention and the type of intervention program which should be developed for each student.

STEP 1 IDENTIFY ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SKILLS

Identify those social skills which are perceived by employers as essential. Because the Secondary Transition and Employment Project (STEP) assessment checklists contain 11 skills which employers in a number of research studies identified as important, they can serve as the basis for a generic job-related social skills curriculum. However, the instructor may wish to collect empirical evidence of the skills valued locally by surveying community employers, using the STEP Community Validation Checklist or a questionnaire of his or her own design.

If a community validation survey is conducted, the list of skills valued by employers can be used to construct a series of assessment checklists. The checklists for employers, parents, and teachers will use the same format, as illustrated by the STEP checklists included in this manual. Ask raters to indicate whether the student performs the skill consistently and independently (a 4 rating), has the skill but doesn't always perform it (3), or does not have the skill at all (2). In instances in which the rater has no opportunity to observe the student's performance on a skill, a rating of (1) is assigned. Using a consistent numerical rating system in designing the checklists will ensure that evaluations from parents, employers, teachers, and the students themselves can be easily compared. (Sample checklists located at end of chapter.)

For the student self-evaluation, a basic "Problem" vs "No Problem" checklist should be used to identify skills which the student sees as

problematic. Once the student has specified which skills he or she has difficulty with, a rating form can be used to help the student focus on the nature of the problem: whether he or she can not or does not perform the skill.

STEP 2 OBTAIN TEACHER ASSESSMENT

For each student, use an assessment checklist to collect information from school personnel who are in a position to evaluate the student's performance of social skills in an employment setting. These include the school work experience coordinator, the student's job trainer, or regular or special education teachers who have observed the student in work situations.

STEP 3 OBTAIN EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT

Collect assessment information from each student's employer, using an evaluation checklist. When possible, arrange to go through the checklist with the employer on the work site, preferably in connection with a periodic evaluation of the student's work performance. Employers are generally quite willing to provide this information but the demands of the workday often make it difficult for an employer to respond promptly to a checklist which is mailed to the business. Moreover, if an employer has questions about how to complete the checklist, he or she may fail to report the information at all.

STEP 4 OBTAIN PARENT ASSESSMENT

Collect assessment information from each student's parent or caregiver when possible. Although parents are not always able to observe or predict the skill performance of their their son or daughter on a job, they often provide useful information about skill strengths and difficulties and including their perspective increases the reliability of the assessment process.

The assessment checklist can be sent home with a cover letter explaining the social skills program, or it may be completed during a regularly scheduled parent conference.

STEP 5 OBTAIN STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Collect assessment information from students. Begin by offering a rationale for enhancing social skills on the job and providing an overview of the assessment process and the instructional program. Ask

each student to complete a simple self-evaluation checklist by marking each of the 11 target skills as "Problem" or "No Problem". "No Problem" skills are scored as a (4). Next the student completes a second evaluation form. For each skill the student has identified as a problem, he or she enters a self-rating score of (2) "I don't have the skill" or (3) "I don't always use the skill."

STEP 6 SUMMARIZE DATA

Summarize the parent, employer, teacher and student ratings on an assessment data summary sheet. This allows for a quick comparison of ratings and reveals which skills will need to be targeted for intervention. Circle these skills on the summary sheet. During the next assessment step a determination will be made of whether intervention for each skill should focus on cognitive or performance factors. Criteria for targeting a skill on the summary sheet include:

The skill has been rated as a (2) or a (3) by a majority of those completing an assessment checklist for the student raters, or

The skill has been rated as a problem by the student.

STEP 7 DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN SKILL AND PERFORMANCE DEFICITS

Determine whether the student has skill or performance deficits. If the STEP assessment materials are used, this is accomplished by individually showing students the STEP videotaped vignettes which have been prepared to accompany the assessment checklists. An outline of each scenario and the appropriate response is included in this manual. Students should be evaluated in a place free from distractions and where their responses cannot be overheard by other students.

For each skill which the student or a majority raters identify as problematical, show the student the Level 3 scenario. Ask the student what the employee in the scenario should do to keep his or her job. Should the student have questions about what is going on in the videotape, provide clarification by referring to the scenario outline. If the student provides an acceptable reponse, mark a (+) in the Level 3 videotape column on the data summary sheet. If the student does not respond appropriately, mark a (-) in the column.

Next show the Level 2 scenario, ask the student to respond to the situation portrayed, and record a (+) or (-) in the Level 2 column on the Data Summary sheet. In instances in which a student is unable to respond appropriately to either a Level 2 or a Level 3 scenario, show the Level 1 and record a (+) or (-) in the Level 1 column of the summary sheet.

If the student can not describe or demonstrate the skill in response to a taped scenario, a skill deficit can be assumed. If the student can

adequately describe or demonstrate the skill, a performance deficit exists.

In situations in which performance deficts are indicated, direct observation of the student in employment settings can provide additional information about situational or personal factors interfering with skill performance and can suggest which intervention strategies are most likely to be successful.

COMMUNITY VALIDATION CHECKLIST OF
JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Please review the social skills listed below and evaluate each skill according to how critical you believe it to be for entry-level employment at your business

SOCIAL SKILL	CRITICAL	HELPFUL	UNIMPORTANT
1. Maintaining good hygiene			
2. Dressing appropriately for work			
3. Accepting instructions			
4. Following instructions			
5. Remaining flexible with changes in supervisor, task, or schedule			
6. Demonstrating interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks			
7. Demonstrating initiative			
8. Accepting constructive criticism			
9. Accepting praise			
10. Demonstrating honesty/reliability			
11. Explaining a problem and asking for help			
12. Dealing appropriately with failure			
13. Dealing appropriately with anger			
14. Maintaining self control			
15. Engaging in cooperative tasks when asked to do so			
16. Engaging in appropriate interactions with coworkers			
17. Engaging in appropriate interactions with clients or customers			
18. Refraining from discussing or conducting personal business on the job			
19. Exhibiting assertiveness when appropriate			
20. Negotiating compromises when necessary			
21. Determining how others feel			
22. Prioritizing tasks			

Please list any additional interpersonal skills you feel are essential for maintaining entry-level employment in your business:

_____

_____

_____

Have you had to terminate employees in the last year for reasons other than reduction in available work? _____YES _____NO

If yes, would you indicate in general terms the reason(s) for termination?

_____

_____

_____

Respondent:_____ Date:_____

Title:_____ Business:_____

TEACHER ASSESSMENT
OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name:_____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater Date

STEP: University of Idaho Revised 5/87

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT
OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name:_____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

STEP: University of Idaho

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater

Date

STEP: University of Idaho Revised 5/87

PARENT ASSESSMENT
OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name:_____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

STEP: University of Idaho Page 2

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater Date

STEP: University of Idaho Student Assessment 1 Revised 10/6/86

Name_____Date_____

School_____

PLEASE READ EACH SKILL LISTED BELOW. THINK ABOUT SITUATIONS THAT HAVE HAPPENED ON YOUR JOB. FOR EACH SKILL, DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM ON THE JOB. THEN MARK THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

	PROBLEM	NO PROBLEM
Being honest		
Accepting and following instructions		
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean		
Controlling anger and stress		
Explaining problems and asking for help		
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks		
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers		
Choosing suitable clothes for work		
Accepting criticism		
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules		
Saving personal business for after work		

STEP: University of Idaho Student Assessment 2 Revised 10/6/86

Name_____Date_____

School_____

THINK ABOUT THE SKILLS WHICH YOU MARKED AS PROBLEMS ON THE JOB.
USE THE SCALE BELOW TO DESCRIBE YOUR PERFORMANCE ON THE PROBLEM SKILLS.

1 = I don't know how I do on the job.

2 = I don't have the skill.

3 = I have the skill but I don't always use it.

SKILL	RATING
Being honest	
Accepting and following instructions	
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Controlling anger and stress	
Explaining problems and asking for help	
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks	
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Choosing suitable clothes for work	
Accepting criticism	
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules	
Saving personal business for after work	

STEP: University of Idaho Revised 5/87

SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT: DATA SUMMARY SHEET

Record the ratings from each evaluator in the appropriate column. Circle skills identified as a problem (rated 2 or 3) by the student or by a majority of the raters.

Student Name_____School_____

RATINGS

SKILL	SELF	ADULT*	TEACHER	EMPLOYER	VIDEO 1	VIDEO 2	VIDEO 3
Being honest							
Accepting and following instructions							
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean							
Controlling anger and stress							
Explaining problems and asking for help							
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks							
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers							
Choosing suitable clothes for work							
Accepting criticism							
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules							
Saving personal business for after work							

*parent, guardian, or other

COMMENTS:

SECONDARY TRANSITION AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECT
The University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843

SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT: VIDEOTAPED SCENARIOS

Outlined below are the scenarios which appear on the assessment videotape. For each skill which is assessed, show the scenario and ask the question printed below it. The student should provide the total response indicated and the evaluator may pause or ask additional questions to elicit the appropriate response.

SKILL 1: Demonstrating Honesty

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Cindy has accepted a babysitting job but a friend has stopped by to ask her to go shopping instead. She is encouraged to call in "sick" by her friend.
Question: What should Cindy do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Go to work

Level 2:
Setting: Auto shop
Situation: Adam would like to "borrow" a tool from his boss for a job he's doing. His boss is out of the shop.
Question: What should Adam do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Don't use the tool without asking his boss

Level 3:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: A friend asks Tiffany, who works the counter, to steal sandwiches for a party at the lake after work.
Question: What should Tiffany do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Refuse to take the food without paying for it

SKILL 2: Acknowledging and Following Instructions

Level 1:
Setting: School
Situation: Mark is learning to perform a custodial job in a school. His supervisor gives him specific directions for cleaning a chalkboard, stacking chairs, and moving some tables.
Question: What should Mark do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Show he heard; ask questions if necessary; think of a way to remember; do as he was told

Level 2:
Setting: Home
Situation: Chris is babysitting. Her employer gives her several important instructions which Chris is not sure she'll remember.
Question: What should Chris do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Indicate that she heard; ask for clarification if needed; decide how to remember; do what she was asked to do

Level 3:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: Kevin works the counter at Arby's. His boss instructs him not to accept out-of-state checks from customers. A customer orders food and wants to pay with an out-of-state check. Kevin tells her he cannot accept the check, but she insists she is a regular customer and she's sure the boss won't mind.
Question: What should Kevin do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Refuse politely to cash the check; offer to get the manager if the customer insists

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SKILL 3: Maintaining Good Hygiene

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Gwen has been working in the yard and is dirty and sweaty. She needs to get ready for her class.
Question: What should Gwen do to get herself ready to go to class?
Response: Wash off or take a bath; choose clean clothes

Level 2:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: Kevin has been mopping the floor. He's been asked to help set up the salad bar as soon as he's finished and has put away the mop and pail.
Question: What should Kevin do when he's finished putting away the mop and pail if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Wash his hands

Level 3:
Setting: Home
Situation: Teri has finished breakfast and read the paper and realizes it's time to get ready for her job as a receptionist.
Question: What should Teri do to get herself ready for work?
Response: Clean up (wash hair, body, brush teeth, clean nails)

SKILL 4: Controlling Anger and Stress

Level 1:
Setting: Grocery store
Situation: Scott has been pricing and shelving merchandise and has stacked empty boxes in the aisle. A customer comes down the aisle and because she is not looking, she stumbles over some boxes. She is furious and yells at Scott and then asks to see his boss.
Question: What should Scott do is he wants to keep his job?
Response: Stay calm; apologize; try to make things right; get boss if customer insists

Level 2:
Setting: Home
Situation: Scott has worked for a neighbor doing yardwork for a week. He has not made a formal agreement with her but has said she should pay him what the job is worth. On Friday she gives him a check for $4.50. He gets more and more upset as he thinks about it and complains to his mother.
Question: What should Scott do if he feels he has been treated unfairly?
Response: Stay calm; decide what he wants/what is fair; go back and tell his employer what he wants/what is fair and why.

Level 3:
Setting: Office
Situation: Adam has been working on a graphics project for his boss. He shows her the completed design but she insists it is not what they had agreed he would do. She wants him to do it over and is upset that they have a deadline to meet.
Question: What should Adam do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Stay calm; ask for clarification/what boss wants; redo it

SKILL 5: Explaining a Problem/Asking for Help

Level 1:
Setting: School
Situation: Kevin is soccer team manager. A friend reports that the coach wants him to check the balls for damage so they can be replaced. Kevin is not sure what the coach means.
Question: What should Kevin do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Find the coach and ask for clarification

Level 2:
Setting: Grocery store
Situation: Scott has been asked by his boss to set up a display case. He tries, but can't get tabs into right slots. He looks at a similar case set up on next aisle but still can't figure it out.
Question: What should Scott do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Try to figure it out; find someone who can help (coworker);ask

Level 3:
Setting: Office
Situation: Teri has a new job as a copy machine operator. She has a problem duplicating a legal-sized document. An experienced coworker is in the outer office.
Question: What should Teri do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Try to figure it out; find someone who can help; ask

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SKILL 6: Exhibiting Enthusiasm for the Job

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Seth's neighbor needs someone to water her plants and bring in her paper and mail while she's on vacation and has asked Seth to do it. He would really like the job.
Question: What should Seth do if he wants the job?
Response: Show he's interested (smile, use enthusiastic voice, and/or express confidence in his ability to do the job); ask for details if needed; say yes

Level 2:
Setting: Office
Situation: Adam has a parttime job stuffing envelopes. Sometimes he is late getting to work. He likes his coworkers and boss. He would like more responsibility. Today his boss offers him an opportunity to learn the new phone system.
Question: What should Adam do if he wants to keep job and be given new responsibilities?
Response: Show he's interested (smile, use enthusiastic voice, and/or express confidence in his ability to do the job); ask for details if needed; say yes

Level 3:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: Tiffany is on break in the dining area and talking with a friend. She has a few minutes left. Business picks up and suddenly there are many customers looking for clean tables. A coworker is working hard to clean but can't keep up.
Question: What should Cindy do if she wants to keep her job and be given new responsibilities?
Response: Volunteer to help coworker so customers are taken care of

SKILL 7: Working Cooperatively with Others

Level 1:
Setting: Recycling Center
Situation: Kevin has worked at the center for quite a while. Scott is a new employee working with Kevin bundling and tying papers. Kevin finishes his bundles and notices that Scott is having a lot of trouble doing the job.
Question: What should Kevin do?
Response: Offer to show coworker how to do his job

Level 2:
Setting: Office
Situation: Ann is involved in a duplicating job that is going to take a long time. A coworker, Adam, needs to copy a two-page report that his boss wants right away.
Question: What should Ann do?
Response: Let Adam go ahead

Level 3:
Setting: Auto shop
Situation: Adam has "covered" for Dennis twice when Dennis had to leave work early. Tomorrow morning Adam needs to see the dentist for a bad toothache. His appointment is for 9:00, but he is supposed to be at work and this is a busy time at the shop. Dennis does not come to work until 10:00.
Question: What should Dennis do?
Response: Offer to cover for Adam if possible

SKILL 8: Dressing Appropriately for the Job

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Mark has just finished painting the trim on his house. He is dressed in paint clothes. He gets a call to interview that afternoon at a grocery store where he has applied for work.
Question: Besides cleaning up, what should Mark do to get ready for the interview if he wants to get the job?
Response: Choose clean, coordinated clothes; dress a little better than the job requires (dress shirt and slacks)

Level 2:
Setting: Home
Situation: Gwen starts her new job at a restaurant on Monday. She is not sure what she should wear.
Question: What should Gwen wear if she wants to keep her new job?
Response: Choose clean, coordinated clothes (shirt and skirt or slacks)

Level 3:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: Tiffany is interviewing for a job at a restaurant. She is offered the job and the interviewer is called away to the phone. Tiffany is not sure if she will be given a uniform or if she should wear her jeans to work.
Question: What should Tiffany do if she doesn't know what is appropriate to wear?
Response: Ask the interviewer what to wear

SKILL 9: Accepting Criticism

Level 1:
Setting: Car wash
Situation: The PHS Band Boosters are having a car wash to raise funds for a trip. Cindy and her friends quickly wash and rinse a truck which has pulled in. The driver insists on inspecting the truck and is not happy with the wash job. She refuses to pay.
Question: What should Cindy do?
Response: Listen politely; agree to re-wash; do it

Level 2:
Setting: Grocery store
Situation: Lisa prices merchandise and stocks shelves at the grocery store. Customers often ask her questions, but Lisa is shy and finds it hard to talk to them. Lisa's boss reminds her how important it is to talk to customers and offer them help.
Question: What should Lisa do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Listen politely; say she'll try; do it

Level 3:
Setting: Fast food restaurant
Situation: Kevin is responsible for setting up the salad bar at Arby's. His supervisor is not happy with the job he is doing and criticizes him in front of customers.
Question: What should Kevin do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Listen politely; say he'll try harder; do it

SKILL 10: Demonstrating Flexibility When Changes Occur

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Cindy has a babysitting job and is usually free by 5:30 p.m. Tonight she has plans to go to dinner and a show with friends at 6:00. She gets a call from her employer late in the afternoon saying she has had an emergency and asking her to stay late.
Question: What should Cindy do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Agree to stay and reschedule with friends, or suggest an alternative plan to employer (ex: have her Mom take over)

Level 2:
Setting: Grocery
Situation: Lisa works with Scott at the grocery and likes him a lot. Scott has asked her to meet him in the break room when she goes on break in 10 minutes. Just then, Lisa's supervisor comes by and tells Lisa she needs her to help shelve a large order and asks if she would mind taking her break later.
Question: What should Lisa do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Agree to take her break later

Level 3:
Setting: Office
Situation: Teri has just started a new job and likes it very much. She has agreed to help a friend move tonight, but her new employer has a project which she must complete right away, and so she asks Teri if she would stay late to help. Teri knows she will be late getting to her friend's house if she stays.
Question: What should Teri do if she wants to keep her new job?
Response: Agree to stay and reschedule with friend, or explain friend is depending on her and suggest an alternative (will come in early a.m. and finish it)

SKILL 11: Saving Personal Business

Level 1:
Setting: Home
Situation: Ann has a babysitting job. While on the job, she gets a call from a good friend and they have many things to talk about. The boy Ann sits with, Jay, wants her attention. He keeps pulling on her and asking her to play a game with him while she is trying to talk on the phone.
Question: What should Ann do?
Response: Say goodbye, hang up immediately and play with Jay

Level 2:
Setting: Office
Situation: Teri works as a receptionist. She has called a friend on the phone while she is at work to make plans to see a movie. The arrangements get complicated and Teri finds herself talking longer than she expected. A customer has come in and wants help. She is getting really impatient.
Question: What should Teri do if she wants to keep her job?
Response: Say goodbye, hang up immediately and attend to customer

Level 3:
Setting: Auto shop
Situation: Adam has a lot of work lined up to do in the shop. His girlfriend shows up on his job and wants to know where he was last night. Adam knows he needs to talk to her because he didn't show up and she's going to be mad if he doesn't try to explain why. But it's a long story and his boss is watching.
Question: What should Adam do if he wants to keep his job?
Response: Tell Teri he'll talk to her after work

CHAPTER 4

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Effective Social Skills Programming

Effective social skills programs for students with handicaps share several important characteristics.

1. Effective social skills programs teach skills which have been socially validated. Social validation is the process of determining if the instructional goals are perceived by the community as important, if the training procedures used to meet these goals are socially acceptable, and if the amount of change achieved is socially important.

2. Intervention should be based on assessment on community-validated skills by the learner and those persons in a position to evaluate him or her. Assessment techniques may include checklists, rating scales and direct observation in the natural environment. Multiple assessments across observers and settings provide a measure of validity for the skills selected for intervention and suggest the type of intervention program which is needed.

3. Given the number of skills it would be useful for a student to know, the relatively brief period usually available for instruction, and the length of time it will take the student to master a skill, those skills which are targeted for intervention should be carefully prioritized. In reviewing assessment data and setting objectives, priority should be given to changing behaviors which mitigate against successful entry into community settings (such as stealing, physical aggression, and behaviors which others perceive as bizarre) and to teaching behaviors which facilitate training on the job (such as acknowledging and following directions and asking for help).

4. Instruction should be individualized. Objectives should be determined by individual assessment data which includes information about the settings in which the learner is expected to function. Instruction should recognize individual strengths and learning style.

5. Social skills training should be part of a coordinated, longitudinal curriculum which includes objectives in a variety of areas. Social skills should not be taught, practiced, and reinforced in isolation but in conjunction with other critical skills. For example, a student involved in work exploration activities may partcipate in a job

training program which includes instruction in mobility skills (walking to work), work skills (folding and stacking towels), and math skills (counting bundles of towels) as well as social skills (requesting assistance from a supervisor, accepting criticism).

6. Effective social skills programs focus on functional skills; that is, those skills which the learner needs to function as independently as possible in the natural environment. Start teaching them early.

7. Training should involve interactions with the nonhandicapped whenever possible. Teach the language or provide an adaptive communication device which will help learners interact with others. Consider approaching nonhandicapped peers or coworkers in the natural environment about helping you teach appropriate interactions.

8. Priority should also be given to helping learners perform the skills in the absence of direct cues from persons in authority: skill mastery requires self-initiation in response to natural cues.

9. Social skills (and other skills as well) should be assessed in the environments in which they need to be performed. Whenever possible, skills should be taught in those environments also, especially for learners who have difficulty generalizing. This requires extensive use of the community.

Teaching Generic Social Skills: Cognitive Elements

If an assessment of a student's generic social skills indicates the presence of a skills deficit rather than a performance deficit, a carefully planned skills training program should be implemented. Students are grouped for instruction according to their training needs, so that only students who require training on a specific skill are included in the instructional group. No assumption of homogeneity should be made when planning instruction for a class; students will vary widely in terms of skill strengths and deficits, and in order to maximize instructional time, students should only receive instruction in skills in which they are deficient, based on a careful assessment.

A review of current research in effective social skills training suggests that each skill first be broken down into its component parts. At the most basic level, this involves a task analysis approach to the skill in order to determine the sequence of behaviors that are generally required for the skill to be successfully performed. For example, a person who performs the skill ASKING FOR HELP typically exhibits the following behaviors:

Find an appropriate person to ask for help
Get the person's attention (make an approach, maintain eye contact, ask to speak to the person)

State the problem
Listen and acknowledge the person's response
Ask for clarification if necessary
Thank the person for helping

Some social skills curricula offer analyses of specific skills. For example, Skillstreaming the Adolescent (Goldstein, 1980) provides an analysis of 50 general social skills ranging in difficulty from initiating a conversation to negotiating a compromise.

While teaching the component behaviors of a skill is a useful place to begin intervention, it is important to realize that the complexity of human interactions and the variability of settings means that teaching a formula response will not equip a student to function adequately in all situations because this approach does not take into account:

1. That behaviors which are expected or tolerated in one setting may not be acceptable or typical in another. For example, a student introduces himself to someone new by extending his hand and saying "Hello. I'm Bill Stanley" on the job site. The same behavior would be considered strange if the student were introducing himself to a peer at a high school pep rally.

2. That often it is necessary to change one's behavior in response to feedback from others involved in the interaction. For example, an employee who needs help may typically ask a coworker for assistance. In a situation in which the coworker is having a bad day and yells at the employee when asked for help, the employee is faced with a number of options in resolving her need for assistance: for example, finding someone else to help or beginning another task until someone else is available to help.

3. That the student must recognize the need to perform the skill and to initiate the skill in response to a naturally occuring stimulus in the environment, not a prompt from a teacher, employer, or parent.

For these reasons it is essential that, to the extent they are cognitively able, students learn to accurately perceive both verbal and nonverbal situational cues and that they develop a strategy for social problem solving. Students need to understand what is happening in a situation and determine the best response. They also need to be able to adjust their behavior in response to feedback from others. A model for social problem solving includes:

Recognizing the existence of a problem
Determining the nature of the problem
Generating solutions
Selecting the best approach
Evaluating consequences
If necessary, selecting an alternative approach

Social perception and social problem solving skills, then, should be an integral part of any social skills training program.

A Model for Teaching Generic Social Skills

The STEP model utilizes the following instructional sequence for social skills training:

1. Provide a rationale for learning the skill and a description of the skill. Ask students direct questions about the information presented to check for comprehension.

2. Model the skill, using live or videotaped scenarios which feature competent peer models whenever possible. Focus students' attention on the model and provide motivation for emulating the model. Direct students' attention to situational factors such as the situational context, nonverbal cues, the responses of others involved in the interaction. Show or describe the cognitive processes the models use in selecting and performing the appropriate skill: this may be accomplished by having the models think aloud, that is, talk through the decision-making process as they select and perform the skill. Alternatively, the instructor may explain the model's behavior.

3. Have students role-play the use of the skill. Initially, students may use situations and scripts which the instructor develops. As they gain experience and confidence, students can generate scenarios based on situations they have encountered at work (or in other settings) which require the performance of the skill. For each roleplay, students discuss the situational factors in operation, the cognitive process the model goes through in performing the skill, and the effects of skill performance on other actors in the scenario.

4. Provide positive and corrective feedback to the student following the roleplay. Emphasize the things a student does correctly and maintain a positive, accepting climate in the group. If alternate responses are suggested, roleplay these and discuss which response would probably be the best approach in this situation and why.

5. Provide opportunities for rehearsal in contrived and natural settings. Rehearse the skill to mastery.

6. Teach students to monitor their own behaviors when possible. Involve students in evaluating their skill performance and in setting instructional goals.

7. Assess generalization and maintenance of skills. Two approaches may be used. If the student is not currently employed, skill performance may be observed and evaluated in a contrived situation in the classroom: the instructor and peer confederates can structure a situation which requires the student to perform the target skill. If the student is employed, skill performance must be evaluated on the job to ensure that skills learned in the classroom are exhibited on the job and that they are maintained over time. Since direct observation of the student on the job can be inordinately time-consuming, evaluation may consist of (1) obtaining a report from the employer or school work supervisior of specific instances in which the student appropriately performed the skill, or (2) setting up a situation on the job which will require the student to perform the skill while the work supervisor unobtrusively observes.

The next section of this manual presents sample lesson plans for teaching two generic skills using the STEP skills training approach.

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

COMMUNITY VALIDATED

ASSESSMENT BASED

INDIVIDUALIZED

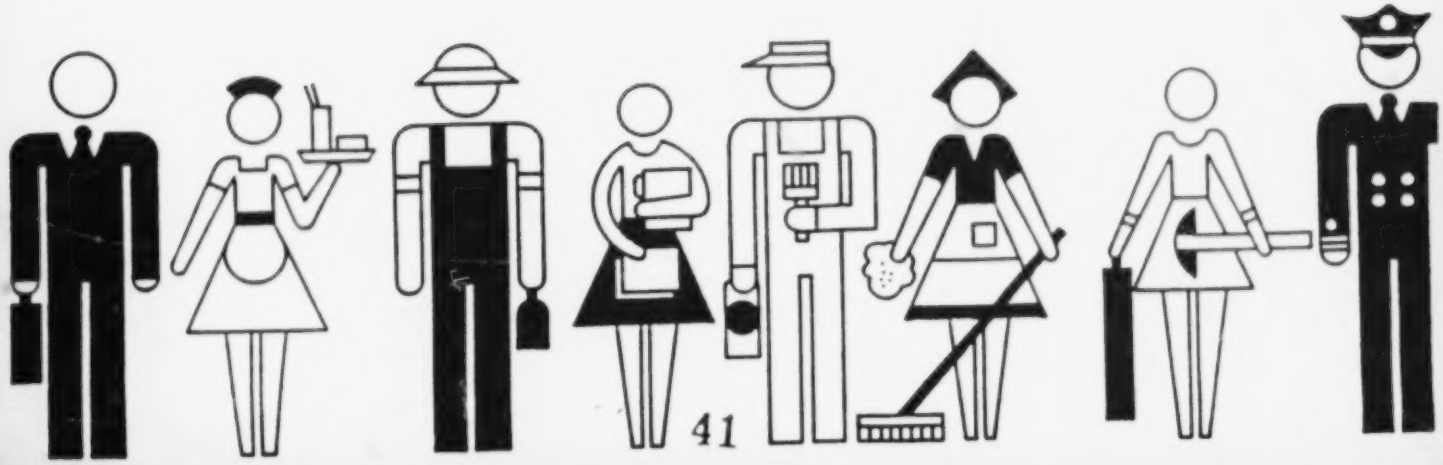
COMMUNITY BASED

PRIORITIZED

COORDINATED

FUNCTIONAL

INTEGRATED



STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: ASKING FOR HELP

Objective: Given a situation on the job requiring the student to ask for help, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills, appropriately request and acknowledge assistance from a supervisor or coworker.

Procedure:

A. During the initial group session, students are provided a rationale for learning the targeted skill. The teacher introduces the following points, using a chart tablet or chalkboard to write down key ideas:

1. Most people need to work and intend to work after they leave school.
2. If you plan to work, it's a good idea to know what employers want: most are willing to train specific job skills but want employees who have basic academic skills; who show up regularly, who are clean and appropriately dressed; and who can get along with others.
3. Employers surveyed by the STEP Project have identified 11 critical social skills. The top 5 included (write on chart tablet or chalkboard):

Honesty	99%
Following directions	97%
Good hygiene	87%
Controlling anger	87%
Asking for help	67%

4. Do you have what employers want? Your self-evaluation indicated you need to learn to ask for help. We can (write ideas on chart tablet or chalkboard):
   1. Talk about problem situations
   2. Decide on the best approaches
   3. Learn to "read" people better
   4. Watch others ask for help
   5. Practice asking for help "

B. Guidelines for group behavior are established and recorded on a chart table so they are visible during group.

C. The skill sequence is taught. Steps in performing this skill include:
   1. Knowing you need help

2. Choosing a good person to ask for help
3. Choosing a good time to ask for help
4. Approaching the person appropriately
5. Stating the problem clearly
6. Choosing another person if your first choice can't help
7. Asking for more explanation if necessary
8. Showing you heard
9. Saying "Thank you"
10. Using the suggestion

D. The skill is modeled using live peer models or videotaped scenarios, with the teacher calling attention to situational factors ("See? The boss is busy right now"), nonverbal cues ("Look at her face. How do you think she feels?")

E. The skill is rehearsed with scenarios generated by students. Scripts are developed: these can be outlines as most students can improvise dialogue from familiar situation very well. Scenarios are videotaped and replayed and positive and corrective feedback is provided.

Evaluation:

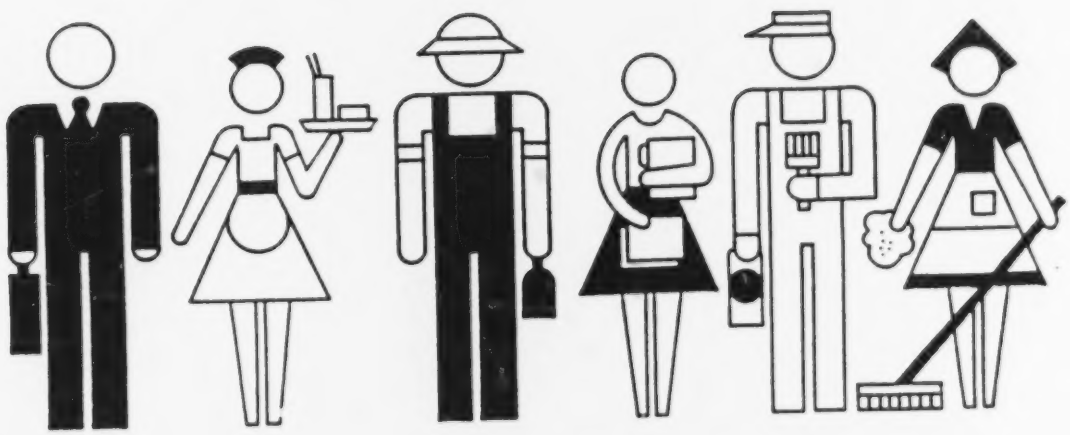
1.Novel Simulation: Ask the student to roleplay his or her response to a situation which has not been discussed or rehearsed in group and evaluate his or her performance. Here's a sample scenario:

You just started a new job as stocker at Modern Way and are using the price tag label maker to mark prices on orange juice. You finish the cans and need to change the price marker so you can mark frozen vegetables, but you don't know how. The manager is talking with a customer on the next aisle; a coworker is stocking shelves by the back door and another coworker is running the cash register.

NOTE: The trainer may have the "coworker" stocking shelves (the logical person to help) refuse to help, in order to check the student's ability to consider alternatives).

2. Work Site Evaluation: Student mastery of this skill must be observed in naturally occuring situations on the job. Generalization from the classroom to the work environment cannot be assumed. Since direct observation can be inordinately time-consuming, evaluation may consist of (1) obtaining a report from the employer or school work supervisor of specific instances in which the student appropriately asked for help, or (2) setting up a situation on the job in which the student needs to ask for help while the work supervisor unobtrusively observes.

A checklist such as the one on the following page may be used to evaluate skill performance.



STEP:University of Idaho

SOCIAL SKILLS PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

SKILL: ASKING FOR HELP RATER_____

STUDENT:_____DATE_____

DID THE PERSON ASKING FOR HELP:

	YES	NO
Recognize that (s)he needed help?		
Choose a person who was willing and able to help?		
Choose an appropriate time to ask?		
Appropriately approach the person?		
Adequately describe the problem?		
If person couldn't or wouldn't help, thank him or her and choose someone else?		
Ask for more explanation if necessary?		
Acknowledge (s)he heard?		
Say "Thank you"?		
Use the suggestion?		

STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: CONTROLLING ANGER AND STRESS

Session 1

Objective:
Given a situation on the job which creates anger or stress for the student, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills and self-control strategies, appropriately deal with his or her anger.

Procedure:

A. During the initial group session, students are provided a rationale for using the targeted skill. The teacher introduces the following points, using a chart tablet or chalkboard to write down key ideas:

1. Most students need to work and intend to work after high school. Many are currently employed.

2. If you plan to work, it's a good idea to know what employers want: most are willing to train specific job skills but want employees who have basic academic skills; who show up regularly; who are clean and appropriately dressed; and who can get along with others.

3. Employers surveyed by STEP identified 11 critical skills. The top 5 included:

Honesty	99%
Following directions	97%
Good hygiene	87%
Controlling anger	87%
Asking for help	67%

4. If you want to get and keep a job, it is important to master these skills.employers want.

5. Besides keeping a job, can you think of other ways in which controlling anger might pay off for you? Some examples:
   a. Keeping a boyfriend: K. blew up at hers; he left her
   b. Staying in school: E. was kicked out last week for blowing up and cursing teacher
   c. Maintaining harmony at home: R. is drawn into family battles, blows, and stays on bad terms with her dad
   d. Feeling good: C. yells at friends and then has headaches, sleepless nights, upset stomach
   e. Feeling worthwhile: V. blew up at work and lost her job; she felt so stupid later.

B. Students are involved in a discussion about the expected outcomes for the group and are given choices of activities. Sample comments of the instructor:

" Your evaluation indicated that you'd like to learn how to control your anger. Over the next several sessions, we'll practice self-control techniques and decide how you might want to use self-control strategies to your advantage. We can:

a. Talk about strategies for controlling anger
b. Talk about problem situations
c. Decide on the best approaches in given situations
d. Learn to "read" people better
e. Watch others model self-control
f. Rehearse self-control strategies
g. Learn some stress-reduction strategies that work

Which of these do you think would help you most?"

NOTE: The trainer should structure activities that capitalize on student priorities so that they are more motivated to participate in activities. Some students may be more interested (and in need of) stress reduction techniques; others may want to learn problem-solving strategies.

C. Guidelines for group behavior are established and recorded on a chart tablet so they are visible during group. Group members should be involved in generating guidelines, which should be brief and few and consistently applied. Suggested guidelines:

Respect the ideas and feelings of other group members (listen, take turns, don't ridicule, keep criticism constructive)
Keep group discussions confidential
Participate

Students who have difficulty functioning in a group setting should not be forced to partictipate and will require an alternate treatment approach, such as 1:1 counseling.

D. Students are asked to generate a list of situations in which they have had problems with self-control. These will be used in later sessions for modelling and rehearsal.

E. The skill is modelled by competent peers who have had an opportunity to rehearse the scenario (a videotape may be substituted for live modelling). The instructor directs the students' attention to pertinent aspects of the situation. The model talks through the cognitive process or the instructor follows up the modelling with an explanation of what the model is thinking.

STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: CONTROLLING ANGER AND STRESS

Session 2

Objective:
Given a situation on the job which creates anger or stress for the student, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills and self-control strategies, appropriately deal with his or her anger.

Procedure:

A. Students review the rationale for skill performance from Session One.
B. Trainer introduces the concept of developing skill fluency.
"We have so many skills to learn; we get more proficient as we get older and have more opportunities to practice them. Think of a skill you had difficulty learning as a child (Example-riding a bike). How did you learn to do it better (Maturity-feet now reach pedals- and practice)."
"Coping, or self-control, is a learned skill that improves with maturity and practice. For example:
Young children think of themselves as the center of the universe; want their needs satisfied immediately; don't understand how others see them; and don't think ahead to the consequences of their actions.
Older children become aware of how others see them and learn the consequences of things they do. As we mature, we learn to tune in to our bodies to know when we're losing control, 'read' other people, think about the consequences of what we do, and to develop our own strategies for control."

"Think of a situation which always made you blow up when you were younger but which doesn't now (Example-teasing by other kids). How did you learn to control your anger?"

"REMEMBER- NONE OF US IS PERFECT, BUT WE ALL DO BETTER WITH PRACTICE."

C. Students are provided an overview of this session's content (a situational strategy for recognizing and dealing with anger).

D. The skill sequence is taught by direct instruction. Steps include:
1. Tune into your body (tense, hot, fidgety, rapid pulse).
2. Decide what's making you feel this way.

3. Decide if you need to be in control of your anger this time. What are the probable consequences of blowing up?
4. Think about ways to control your anger, depending on the situation. Some ideas (students may have others):
   a. Ignore what's bothering you; think about something else. If someone's being offensive, let the comments pass.
   b. Leave the scene until you can get control of yourself.
   c. Be assertive. In a positive way, let the person who is causing you to feel angry know how you see the situation, and what you would like to happen.
   d. Count to 10 and try to fix the problem.
5. Choose best approach for the situation you're in. Watch carefully the effect of your behavior on other people. If your plan doesn't seem to be working think about trying something else.

E. Peers model each of the ways to control anger, with teacher and students discussing situations in which each strategy would be appropriate:

a. Ignore what's bothering you; think about something else.
Suggested roleplay- Your coworker is in a bad mood, and is slamming desk drawers. It's mildly annoying. He's leaving for an appointment soon.

b. Leave the scene until you can get control of yourself.
Suggested roleplay- You made an expensive mistake on the job and your boss has yelled at you in front of several coworkers. He returns to his office and you feel like crying.

c. Be assertive. In a positive way, let the person who is causing you to feel angry know how you see the situation, and what you would like to happen.
Suggested roleplay- You want to return a machine you recently purchased with a defective part. The store does not want to replace the machine but is willing to send it off to be repaired. They say it will take about six weeks. You need it now.

d. Count to 10 and try to fix the problem.
Suggested roleplay- You're working construction and have just bumped into a bucket of oil stain you were using to stain a deck. The stain splashes all over the deck and portions of the siding on the house.

STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: CONTROLLING ANGER AND STRESS

Session 3

Objective:
Given a situation on the job which creates anger or stress for the student, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills and self-control strategies, appropriately deal with his or her anger.

Procedure:

A. Review purpose of group, behavioral guidelines, key ideas from previous session.

B. Have students describe situations in which they have had problems dealing with anger or stress (taken from the initial session). They describe their response to the situation and the consequences of their actions. For each situation, the group generates alternate ways to control anger/stress and the probable consequences of each. Teacher, support staff, and/or peer then model the behavior determined by the group to be the best approach in that situation.

C. Students rehearse the modelled behavior with feedback from others in the group (may be video-taped for self-monitoring and self-correction). Students can be encouraged to use self-talk to think their way through the situation.

STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: CONTROLLING ANGER AND STRESS

Session 4

Objective:
Given a situation on the job which creates anger or stress for the student, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills and self-control strategies, appropriately deal with his or her anger.

Procedure:

A. Students and teacher review the purpose of the group, behavioral guidelines, key ideas from previous sessions.

B. Students and teacher review strategies for dealing with anger or stress from Lesson Three.

C. Teacher presents a scenario for a stressful situation on the job. Students team up to write scripts for possible endings with one student writing dialogue for the customer and one for the employee. This lesson plan includes a sample scenario in which a customer attempts to return a bathing suit at a retail store; the point of view of both customer and employee is presented and space is provided for students to write out dialogue. Four additional, optional sample scenarios are also included with this lesson. They set up a scenario and provide space for students to write out dialogue or jot down ideas for improvising dialogue for the roleplay.

D. Students rehearse and perform their scripts for others in the group. All students are encouraged to comment on their reactions and to provide suggestions for revising the scripts.

E. Teacher introduces some effective <u>long-term</u> techniques for reducing stress.
"These are some long term coping strategies that have to do with reducing stress and improving a person's attitude toward life in general. Which of these have you tried? Which would you like to learn more about during these sessions?"

1. Setting goals and deciding what's important to you (don't sweat the small stuff)
2. Talking yourself through situations
3. Exercising to work off tension and feel good about yourself
4. Meditation
5. Self-hypnosis
6. Visualization
7. Self-reinforcement (rewarding yourself for doing something well)

Sudents select techniques to investigate in subsequent sessions. The trainer demonstrates these if he or she has the expertise, or invites a qualified resource person to do so.

SAMPLE SCENARIO

Customer: You want to return a bathing suit purchased three weeks ago from The Vogue. You didn't realize until you got a good look at the back of the suit at home that it made you look really fat. Stores should take back unsatisfactory merchandise. The customer is always right. The salesperson is giving you a hard time about taking it back. You plan to stand right there at the counter until you get your money.

Salesperson: You've been on the job six weeks. You know the store's policy is to take back merchandise for almost any reason. But federal law prohibits the return of swimwear. You want to please the customer but really shouldn't take the suit back. You hate to bother your supervisor and so you try to deal with the customer. She gets unreasonable and won't leave. Her behavior will be noticed by the other customers and is embarassing you.

Write the dialogue to resolve this situation the best way you know how:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

Salesperson:

Customer:

DEALING WITH ANGER AND STRESS

Sample Roleplay Scenario

WRITE A SCRIPT FOR THIS SITUATION. WRITE WHAT THE CUSTOMER WOULD SAY AND WHAT THE EMPLOYEE SHOULD SAY IF HE OR SHE WANTS TO KEEP THE JOB.

You work as a bagger at Albertson's. You're carrying out a customer's bags in the pouring rain as she tries to reason with her 2 young children, who are screaming for Yogo-Yummies. As you place the bags in her car, you drop a carton of milk on the pavement and it bursts. She is very upset and yells at you.

PROPS: Grocery bags, milk carton

SCRIPT:

DEALING WITH ANGER AND STRESS

Sample Roleplay Scenario

WRITE A SCRIPT FOR THIS SITUATION. WRITE WHAT THE CUSTOMER WOULD SAY AND WHAT THE EMPLOYEE SHOULD SAY IF HE OR SHE WANTS TO KEEP THE JOB.

You have a new part time job as graphics designer. You have an assignment but need a template and some graph paper and your boss is busy. You ask a coworker for help. (S)he is obviously upset about something and yells at you.

PROPS: Table, art supplies
SCRIPT:

DEALING WITH ANGER AND STRESS

Sample Roleplay Scenario

WRITE A SCRIPT FOR THIS SITUATION. WRITE WHAT THE CUSTOMER WOULD SAY AND WHAT THE EMPLOYEE SHOULD SAY IF HE OR SHE WANTS TO KEEP THE JOB.

You work as a sales clerk at a retail store. A customer comes in to return a jacket which came apart the first time she washed it. She has no sales receipt but you are authorized to give in-store credit for the amount of purchase, no questions asked. She is not happy with that and instead wants a cash refund plus $20 for her trouble. She gets very angry when you tell her you can't refund her money.

PROPS: Torn Jacket
SCRIPT:

DEALING WITH ANGER AND STRESS

Sample Roleplay Scenario

WRITE A SCRIPT FOR THIS SITUATION. WRITE WHAT THE CUSTOMER WOULD SAY AND WHAT THE EMPLOYEE SHOULD SAY IF HE OR SHE WANTS TO KEEP THE JOB.

A coworker has been asked to train a new employee. She is upset because she is not paid to supervise, no one else has been asked to help and she feels she has enough to handle just doing her own job. She yells at you because you seem to have plenty of time.

SCRIPT:

STEP SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

SKILL: **CONTROLLING ANGER AND STRESS**

Sessions 5,6.....

Objective:
Given a situation on the job which creates anger or stress for the student, he or she will, using adequate social perception and problem-solving skills and self-control strategies, appropriately deal with his or her anger.

Procedure:

A. Students review purpose of group sessions and the fact that this session features a strategy they wanted to learn more about.

B. Each session, the teacher or other expert introduces students to one of several long-term strategies for reducing stress.

Final Session: Review
A. Students discuss causes of stress
B. Students discuss reactions to stress
C. Students describe how their reactions to stress affects relationships, health, job
D. Students review a strategy for coping with an immediate situation:
   a. Tune into your body (tense, hot, fidgety, rapid pulse)
   b. Decide what made you feel this way (internal or external factors operating)
   c. Decide if you need to be in control of your anger (what are the consequences of blowing up?)
   d. Think about ways to control (ignore, leave, be assertive, or count to 10 and try to fix things)
   e. Choose the best approach for the situation (fix it, negotiate around it, or leave it)

F. Instructors review some long-term strategies for dealing with stress:
   1. Setting goals and deciding what's important to you (don't sweat the small stuff)
   2. Talking yourself through situations
   3. Self-reinforcement (rewarding youself for doing well)
   4. Exercising to work off tension and feel good about yourself
   5. Meditation 6. Self-hypnosis 7. Visualization

CHAPTER 5

ENHANCING SKILL PERFORMANCE

The teaching strategies outlined in Chapter 4 are effective in dealing with a skill deficit, that is, in instances in which a student does not know how to perform a skill.

However, if the STEP assessment process indicates that a student is having difficulty performing a skill in a work situation yet knows how to perform the skill, a different intervention approach is indicated.

The following strategies can be used to design intervention programs for performance deficits.

1. If performance appears to be a problem in only one setting, obtain as much information as possible about situational factors which may be inhibiting skill performance. For example, if the student knows how to ask for help and asks for help appropriately in class but will not ask on the job, look into the situation at the work site. Talk to the student, talk to the employer or work supervisor, and spend enough time on the job site to get a feeling for the work atmosphere, including employer expectations and management style and coworker attitudes.

2. If student consistently fails to perform skills across a number of settings, explore appropriate strategies to enhance skill performance. These include self-control strategies and counseling programs.

Self-control strategies

Goal setting: Many students with mild handicaps do not feel they are in control of their lives. However, these students can learn to prioritize their needs, set realistic goals, and develop plans for reaching their goals. If students perceive employment as a means of achieving goals, they may be more motivated to exhibit the social skills they need to maintain employment. For example, a student who wants to keep his job in order to buy a car feels like walking off the job when the boss criticizes him but may accept the boss's remarks and modify his behavior instead.

Self-monitoring: Students can be encouraged to think about what is going on in a situation, the effect of their behaviors on others, and

the consequences of their actions. They can monitor the success of their problem-solving efforts.

Self-reinforcement: Students can learn to reward themselves for appropriate behaviors in a number of ways from positive self-talk to allowing themselves a special treat for handling a difficult situation.

Group or individual counseling

In some cases, a therapeutic approach by a trained professional is indicated for the student, either in group or on an individual basis. Treatment may include such areas as self-esteem enhancement, anxiety reduction training, or assertiveness training.

3. Avoid implementing strategies which make the student dependent on extrinsic rewards such as contingency contracting with the teacher or job trainer or verbal praise from the trainer on the job site when the skill is performed. Reinforcement should be intrinsic or limited to that which is naturally present in the environment in which the skill must be performed. For example, a weekly paycheck is a natural reinforcer for showing up for work each day. Demonstrating interest in the job and a willingness to learn new tasks may be reinforced by assignment to a more challenging job.

4. If performance inhibition is severe or longstanding, recognize the difficulty in effecting change during the student's last years in school. In this case, consider a job-person match. Work on enhancing the performance of skill which are problemmatic, but place the student on a job site in which failure to exhibit the skill is less likely to result in his or her termination. The student's entry into vocational settings should not be contingent on mastery of any given set of social skills.

APPENDIX A

"Assessing Job-Related Social Skills"

in preparation

Teaching Community-Validated Job-Related Social Skills to Secondary Students with Mild Handicaps: Assessment Strategies

Running head: ASSESSING JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Abstract

This article reviews considerations underlying social competence and summarizes several approaches to enhancing the social competence of students with mild handicaps in the workplace. Current assessment strategies are discussed and the social skills identified in the literature as essential for obtaining and maintaining employment are delineated. The article also describes a study in which an employer-validated list of social skills was used to collect assessment data from students, employers, teachers, and parents. For each skill that was reported as problematic for a student, he or she was shown a series of videotaped stems to determine whether he or she knew how to perform the skill. The data was then reviewed and correlated across evaluators to determine the ability of students to accurately assess their areas of difficulty. Results of the assessment process indicated that students tend to exhibit performance problems rather than skill deficits and that employers are better evaluators of social skill strengths and deficts than are students, parents, or work experience supervisors.

Teaching Community-Validated, Job-Related Social Skills to Students with Mild Handicaps: Assessment Strategies

As competitive employment becomes a major objective of special education programming for students with mild handicaps, researchers are increasingly interested in the relationship between social competence and the ability to obtain and maintain competitive employment.

Results of recent studies indicate that students with mild handicaps exhibit a variety of social skill deficits which differentiate them from nonhandicapped students and which may affect their adjustment in the workplace. For example, Schumaker, Hazel, Sherman, & Sheldon (1982) found that performance differences can be demonstrated between students labeled LD and those labeled non-LD on seven of eight general social skills: giving positive feedback, giving negative feedback, accepting negative feedback, resisting peer pressure, negotiating conflict situations, conversation, and personal problem solving. Only in the area of following instructions was there no significant difference between the performance, as a group, of students labeled LD and those identified as non-LD students. In an earlier study, Matthews, Whang, and Fawcett (1980) found that LD students performed significantly worse than non-LD students on four of ten work-related social skills, including participating in a job interview, accepting criticism from an employer, giving criticism to a coworker, and explaining a problem to an employer.

Given the wide range of interpersonal skills which may be required of students with handicaps in work settings, the major problems in social skills programming will be identifying those which are considered important or socially useful by significant others (Gresham, 1981); clearly defining the cognitive and performance components of each skill; accurately assessing skill competence; and developing intervention strategies which maximize skill generalization and maintenance.

Social skills programming should assess and teach skills identified as essential by significant others and training outcomes should be evaluated in terms of whether others see persons with handicaps as more valuable or competent as a result of training. Gresham (1981), in a review of social skills studies involving students with handicaps, noted a lack of evidence that the skills selected for assessment and training were actually validated as those needed for effective functioning in social interactions. Schumaker & Hazel (1984) reviewed 46 studies which identified cognitive social skill deficits or overt behavior deficits of students labeled learning disabled: a major finding was the need to socially validate identified skill deficits to determine their effect on the perceptions of parents, employers, peers and teachers of the students' social competence. The absence of social validity data may result in social skills instruction which fails to teach any critical interpersonal skills or which teaches only those skills needed in a special education setting.

Surveying employers to determine which social skills they consider essential for obtaining and maintaining employment provides a measure of social validity for an intervention program. Potential employers should be asked to specify the behaviors which are important to them (Voeltz & Evans, 1983). Researchers have identified a number of critical job-related social skills based on information provided by employers. Noncompliance with supervisors, tardiness, poor attendance, maladaptive behaviors (Wehman,1982); inappropriate behaviors (Schalock & Harper, 1978); poor social relationships and inappropriate verbal behaviors (Moss, 1979); and poor peer relationships, poor relations with supervisors, poor motivation, and inappropriate behaviors (Brickey, Browning, & Campbell, 1982) appear to be related to failure in employment. Also related are such problems as not listening to the boss, inappropriate conversations, fighting, stealing, tardiness, nosiness, lack of motivation, and being easily angered (Greenspan & Shoultz, 1981). Vautour, Stocks, and Kolek (1983) found that employers listed tardiness, absenteeism, and failure to follow directions as concerns in training workers with handicaps. Matson and Andrasik (1982) reported that job supervisors are more intolerant of social skill inadequacies (inappropriate requests, negative statements about coworkers) than task performance inadequacies. Burton & Bero (1984) interviewed 25 local employers of educationally handicapped students to identify those skills which should be included in a comprehensive career education curriculum and learned that specific job performance skills were perceived as less important than getting along with people, coping with stress under pressure, showing enthusiasm for the job, dependability, and communicating with the public. Thus, at least in the area of employment, some social skills have been identified as critical by persons directly involved in evaluating social competence in the workplace: employers and work supervisors.

In addition to ensuring that the job-related social skills selected for assessment and instruction are considered important by employers, researchers must deal with the issue of whether to focus on identifying and teaching skills which are specific to a particular job site or more generic skills which are required in a variety of work settings. While a survey of community employers can yield information about the relative importance of a number of interpersonal skills (for example, interacting with customers), it will not delineate the specific competencies required in a particular work environment and their importance to the employer or supervisor (for example, the ability to interact with the parents of preschoolers at a day care center each day). An approach to the problem of whether to assess and teach general social skills versus job-specific skills may lie in combining a community-validated assessment of general social skills with an individual inventory of the specific skills required on the site where the student is placed and an assessment of his or her performance. It is possible, for example, that a student can perform essential social skills in a number of situations and yet have difficulty in a particular situation on his job. An

inventory would also yield information about skills assigned a high priority by an individual employer or skills more likely to be required by a particular work setting: for example, while the ability to compliment others is not critical for a student working independently at custodial tasks, it is essential for a student employed as a sales clerk at a clothing store.

Another issue in social skills assessment and instruction involves determining just what constitutes effective skill performance and designing a multi-factored assessment process to ensure that all relevant skill components are assessed (Gresham, 1983). Social competence involves cognitive and perceptual factors as well as performance factors (Arkowitz, 1981), although the relative importance of each factor in achieving social competence has not yet been clearly established. Cognitive/perceptual factors include a knowledge of social conventions and the meaning of various response cues, the ability to attend to relevant aspects of the interaction such as the interactional context and feedback from others, the ability to process information, and the ability to predict and evaluate interpersonal consequences (Morrison & Bellack, in press). Performance components include acceptable behavioral responses such as appropriate sequences, timing, and verbal and nonverbal content (Bellack, 1979), effective use of problem-solving strategies, and acceptable frequency of appropriate behaviors. Thus, failure to exhibit appropriate social behaviors in a natural situation may be the result of cognitive/perceptual deficits such as misreading situational cues or not having the skill in one's repertoire; or the lack of appropriate behaviors may be a function of an inability to perform in certain situations due to anxiety, low motivation, or other factors. Because the intervention strategies for a skill deficit (such as perception training, modeling and verbal rehearsal) differ from approaches useful for treating performance deficits (such as anxiety reduction and self-control techniques) it is important to develop an assessment procedure which differentiates between the two.

It appears that no single assessment device currently available is comprehensive enough to serve as a basis for a social skills intervention program. Behavioral checklists are easy to use, nonreactive, and can be designed to measure the use of cognitive skills (such as problem solving) and the quality of responses; however they do not yield socially valid information about whether skill performance results in acceptance by others. Sociometric devices and rating scales provide social validity but do not measure the specific components of skill performance (Schumaker & Hazel, 1984). Self-report and simulated interactions are useful in assessing whether a social skill exists at all in a student's repertoire; however, actual measures of skill performance in natural environments are required to determine whether a performance deficit exists and under what circumstances performance is inhibited.

The assessment process, then, should:

1. Identify general social skills perceived by community employers as essential.
2. Evaluate the student's general skills performance on skills identified by community employers as essential. Self-assessment is useful because it appears that LD students may be more accurate in their ratings than their teachers (Hazel, Smalter, & Schumaker, 1983); evaluations by others who are a natural part of the student's social environment (parents, teachers, and current and former employers) are useful as validity is enhanced by the use of multiple raters and the risk of observational reactivity reduced (Hartmann, 1984).
3. Assess job-related social skills deficits specific to the student's work setting using naturalistic observation and a skill analysis on the job site.
4. For those skills identified as deficient, determine whether the skill can be performed at all (if not, cognitive deficits exist).
5. For those skills which can be performed but are not consistently (performance defcts), delineate the conditions under which the skill is performed. The effect of situational factors should be taken into account when assessing general skills. Students who can competently perform a skill in one setting may have difficulty in other circumstances. Naturalistic observation across settings can yield important information about whether social incompetence results from cognitive deficits or performance inhibititon due to situational factors.
6. For those skills targeted for intervention, obtain information about the quality of skill as it is currently performed and the criteria for adequate performance in situations of concern.
7. Measure training outcomes in terms of whether the student can, in new situations, perform skills on which he or she has been trained and whether the student is perceived by employers and work supervisors as more competent in the performance of identified skills as a result of instruction.

Two approaches are suggested by the need for a comprehensive assessment of social skills. One is to observe the student in a number of environments where selected social skills typically should be performed. This strategy can differentiate between performance and skill deficits and can target specific activities and environments in which assistance is needed. Unfortunately, this approach is very time-consuming as it depends on the natural occurence of a situation which requires the student to perform the targeted skill. Skill performance may also be influenced by the presence of the observer. A second strategy is to collect information from a variety of people who are in a position to regularly observe a student's performance on selected skills. Data indicate that involving students in rating their own performance may provide an accurate representation of their actual behavior. A study by Hazel, Smalter, & Schumaker (1983) indicated that

LD adolescents' ratings of their own skills correlated significantly with their performance both in roleplay situations and in contrived situations in the natural environment. This strategy is time-efficient, is supported by research on anecdotal assessment procedures, can potentially differentiate between skill and performance deficits, and can target activities and environments which, and people with whom, a student is having difficulties. However, whether students with mild handicaps can accurately evaluate what social skills they are having problems with and the type of problem (skill or performance deficit) has not been established.

This study was designed to investigate (1) whether students with mild handicaps can rate their social skills performance on job-related social skills as well as or better than their parents/caregivers, employers, or work supervisors and (2) whether students and employers can differentiate between skill deficits or performance deficits in identified problem areas.

Method

Phase 1- Validation of assessment checklists

A survey questionnaire containing twenty-one social skills was prepared. The skills included those identified in the literature as critical to maintaining employment together with those mentioned by community employers participating in the STEP project in their evaluations of secondary students with handicaps who had participated in community-based work experience.

One hundred local employers were surveyed using the questionnaire to determine which social skills they perceived to be essential for employment in entry-level jobs. The survey included employers who were providing work observation or job training experiences for students with handicaps and employers who hire for entry level positions in careers in which students with handicaps typically engage after leaving school, including food service, custodial, and clerical occupations. Employers were asked to rate the importance of social skills to the workplace with no regard to handicapping conditions.

Employers were sent the survey checklist and asked to assign a priority to each skill according to how critical they believed it to be for entry-level employees. Employers were also asked to list any additional skills they felt were essential for maintaining entry-level employment and to indicate in general terms their reasons for terminating employees who had been let go during the past year. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were included with the survey questionnaire. Six weeks after the first mailing, a followup letter with a copy of the questionnaire and a stamped envelope was sent to those employers who had not responded to the first request. Sixty-seven of the questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 67% (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Employers were also asked to list additional interpersonal skills they felt were essential for employment (see Table 2). These were used to revise the questionnaire.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 reports employers' stated reasons for terminating employees during the 12 months preceding the study.

Insert Table 3 about here

Phase 2- Fieldtest of assessment checklists

The community-validated checklist was used to construct a preassessment device which was piloted with a group of 15 high school seniors with mild handicaps ranging in age from 17 to 20 who were enrolled in a two-semester class to teach job-finding and job-maintenance skills. Fourteen of these students concurrently engaged in paid work experience on job sites in the community for which they received high school credits.

Both forms were revised to reflect feedback from students, employers, teachers, and parents and to incorporate additional items included in the community survey. For the actual study, the number of items on each checklist was reduced to 11 skills identified as critical by at least 57% of the employers sampled.

A videotape was then prepared consisting of three vignettes for each of the 11 targeted skills. Level One vignettes portrayed middle school or junior high students involved in straightforward situations requiring the performance of social skills; Level Two portrayed senior high students in a more complex job-related situations, and Level Three presented even more complex situations faced by senior high students on jobs. Appropriate responses to the videotaped stems were validated by surveying two work supervisors and an employer. The videotaped vignettes were developed to be shown to students who indicated on their self-evaluation checklists that they had a problem with one or more of the eleven targeted skills.

Phase 3- Assessment

Thirty-one students ages 16-18 with mild handicaps from three school districts who were currently employed or engaged in work experience participated in the study. Students were asked to conduct a self-assessment using the employer-validated checklist. For each student, assessment data was also obtained from the parent or caregiver, current employer, and work experience coordinator using a checklist containing the same items as those used in the Student Self- Assessment. For each problem checked, the student was shown Level 1,2, and 3 vignettes and was asked to tell what the person in each vignette should do if he/she wanted to keep his/her job. Two independent observers rated the student's response to the videotape stem against the validated responses. If the student could not describe or demonstrate the skill in response to the tape, a skill deficit was assumed. If the student could adequately describe or demonstrate the skill, a performance deficit was assumed.

For each student, correlations between the ratings of each evaluator and the student's video performance score were computed. In instances in which scores of "1" (Don't Know) were recorded for any one question by an evaluator, no comparisons were made of the total assessment score recorded by that evaluator and the student's performance on the videotapes. Scores on assessments that did not contain any "1's" were

treated as interval data and were compared using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

The results of the comparisons are shown in Table 4. There was a high positive correlation between employer ratings of student social skills strengths and deficits and the students' actual performance in response to videotaped scenarios. However, there was only a low positive correlation between the students' self-assessment of their strengths and deficits and their actual performance.

Insert Table 4 about here

An analysis of mean discrepancies across individual questions was conducted by using Friedman's nonparametric ANOVA adjusted for ties.

For the 31 students, the frequency with which a social skill was rated as problematic by at least 2 evaluators was computed. The rank and frequency of the skills most often cited are shown in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

Discussion

Results of this study indicate that students with mild handicaps may not be able to adequately assess their strengths and weaknesses on job related social skills. Parents and school work supervisors or teachers fare only slightly better in predicting the kinds of problems students may have on the job. It may be possible to accurately measure a student's performance on job-related social skills only after he or she is placed in a work environment. Community-based vocational training is useful, then, not only for identifying and teaching specific work skills, but also for providing information about how a student functions socially in work situations.

For most of the students in this study, social skills deficits tend to be performance rather than skill deficits. This is a critical distinction as the nature of the deficit will suggest the type and

content of social skills program. The interventions employed when a student lacks a social skill are very different from those used when he or she knows what to do but fails to (or chooses not to) perform the skill. If a student does not know how to perform a skill, a skills training program can be designed which provides a rationale for learning the skill, direct instruction in how to perform the skill, live or videotaped modeling by competent peers, behavioral rehearsal with feedback from peers and the trainer, opportunities to use the skill in response to novel situations and people, and posttraining assessment in the natural environment to ensure that generalization has occurred. The program should incorporate training in social perception and social problem-solving skills.

If the assessment process indicates that a student has the skills required to perform and yet does not exhibit them, direct observation of the student on the work site can yield essential information for designing an intervention plan. The process would include these steps:

1. Record the conditions, activities, environments, and/or people under which the student has difficulties with social skills
2. Determine the level of skill performance required by the setting
3. Explore appropriate strategies to enhance performance skill performance such as anxiety reduction, social perception training, or self-control strategies (self-monitoring, self-reinforcement).

Another issue is raised by this study. The employer survey conducted in conjunction with the development of the assessment instrument corroborates other research indicating that employers value those skills needed to conform to social norms and behavioral expectations (such as following directions, being flexible and trustworthy, maintaining self-control) over the social adjustment skills needed to develop satisfying personal relationships (for example, initiating conversation and providing compliments and constructive criticism). This suggests that the focus of instruction in vocational social skills should be on compliance skills.

References

Table 1

Results of Employer Validation
of Twenty-one Job-related Social Skills
N=67

Rank	Skill	Number of Responses			
		Critical	Helpful	Unimportant	No Rating
1	Demonstrate Honesty	66	1	0	
2	Accept Instructions	65	2	0	
3	Maintain Good Hygiene	58	9	0	
3	Maintain Self Control	58	7	0	2
4	Deal with Anger	49	18	0	
5	Explain Problem	45	20	0	2
6	Demonstrate Interest	44	23	0	
7	Dress Appropriately	43	23	0	1
8	Cooperate	41	26	0	
9	Accept Criticism	39	28	0	
10	Remain Flexible	38	29	0	
10	Refrain from Conducting Personal Bus. on Job	38	25	4	
11	Deal With Failure	35	32	0	
12	Prioritize Tasks	28	38	1	
13	Exhibit Assertiveness	22	44	1	
14	Compromise	20	42	4	1
15	Accept Praise	18	49	0	
16	Introduce Self	13	50	3	1
17	Initiate Conversation	6	49	11	1
18	Provide Constructive Criticism	5	48	13	1
19	Provide Compliments	4	52	10	1

Table 2

Additional Interpersonal Skills Listed as Essential by Surveyed Employers

Skill	Number of Employer Responses
Ability to interact with customers/clients	6
Ability to ask and answer questions	2
Good oral and written communication skills	2
Understanding policies and roles	2
Dependability	2
Maintaining confidentiality	1
Demonstrating initiative	1

Table 3

Community Validation Survey: Employers' Stated Reasons for Terminating Employees During the Past Year

Reason for Termination	Number of Terminations
Absenteeism/tardiness	10
Poor quality of work	7
Dishonesty/theft	5
Negative attitude	4
Low production	4
Inability to work cooperatively	3
General policy violations	2
Drugs/drinking	2
Not following directions	1
Lack of enthusiam	1
Poor hygiene	1
Inappropriate interactions with coworkers	1
Poor work habits	1
Not dependable	1
Refused to return to work after injury	1
Pregnancy	1

STEP: University of Idaho Revised 5/87

TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name: _____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater Date

STEP: University of Idaho Revised 5/87

EMPLOYER ASSESSMENT
OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name:_____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater Date

PARENT ASSESSMENT OF JOB-RELATED SOCIAL SKILLS

Student Name:_____

Please review the social skills listed below and use the following scale to evaluate the student's performance on the job. Record a 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating for each skill. Thank you.

1 = I have had no opportunity to observe the student's performance of this skill and have no idea how he or she would do

2 = The student does not have the skill.

3 = The student has the skill but doesn't always perform it.

4 = The student performs the skill consistently and independently.

SKILL	RATING
Is honest	
Accepts and follows instructions	
Keeps hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Maintains self-control	
Explains problems and asks for help appropriately	
Shows interest in the job and is willing to learn new tasks	
Works cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Chooses suitable clothes for work	

SKILL	RATING
Accepts criticism	
Accepts changes in work assignments and schedules	
Refrains from conducting personal business on the job	

COMMENTS:

Rater Date

STEP: University of Idaho Student Assessment 1 Revised 10/6/86

Name_____Date_____

School_____

PLEASE READ EACH SKILL LISTED BELOW. THINK ABOUT SITUATIONS THAT HAVE HAPPENED ON YOUR JOB. FOR EACH SKILL, DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM ON THE JOB. THEN MARK THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

	PROBLEM	NO PROBLEM
Being honest		
Accepting and following instructions		
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean		
Controlling anger and stress		
Explaining problems and asking for help		
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks		
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers		
Choosing suitable clothes for work		
Accepting criticism		
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules		
Saving personal business for after work		

STEP: University of Idaho Student Assessment 2 Revised 10/6/86

Name_____Date_____

School_____

THINK ABOUT THE SKILLS WHICH YOU MARKED AS PROBLEMS ON THE JOB.
USE THE SCALE BELOW TO DESCRIBE YOUR PERFORMANCE ON THE PROBLEM SKILLS.

1 = I don't know how I do on the job.

2 = I don't have the skill.

3 = I have the skill but I don't always use it.

SKILL	RATING
Being honest	
Accepting and following instructions	
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean	
Controlling anger and stress	
Explaining problems and asking for help	
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks	
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers	
Choosing suitable clothes for work	
Accepting criticism	
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules	
Saving personal business for after work	

SOCIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT: DATA SUMMARY SHEET

Record the ratings from each evaluator in the appropriate column. Circle skills identified as a problem (rated 2 or 3) by the student or by a majority of the raters.

Student Name_____School_____

	RATINGS						
SKILL	SELF	ADULT*	TEACHER	EMPLOYER	VIDEO 1	VIDEO 2	VIDEO 3
Being honest							
Accepting and following instructions							
Keeping hair, teeth, clothes & body clean							
Controlling anger and stress							
Explaining problems and asking for help							
Showing interest in the job and willingness to learn new tasks							
Working cooperatively with supervisor and co-workers							
Choosing suitable clothes for work							
Accepting criticism							
Accepting changes in work assignments and schedules							
Saving personal business for after work							

*parent, guardian, or other

COMMENTS:

Table 4

Comparison of Employer, Student, Parent, and Teacher Ratings and Student Performance on Videotaped Stems

	Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient
Employer rating/student performance	.83
Student rating/student performance	.37
Parent rating/student performance	.56
Teacher rating/student performance	.54

Table 5

Social Skills Most Frequently Cited by Raters as Problematic

Rank	Skill	% of students cited
1	Explaining a problem and asking for help	.90
2	Accepting criticism	.55
	Accepting changes in work assigments and schedules	.55
3	Saving personal business for after work	.39
4	Accepting and following instructions	.35
	Controlling anger and stress	.35

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APPENDIX B

The following job skill inventory is an example of how to incorporate social skills into an inventory which you would develop for a student with handicaps on a job site.

Once the student is assessed against the skills required by the job, you can note any discrepancies between the way the skill is usually performed by a nonhandicapped person and the way it is performed by your student. You can then make decisions about which skills you will teach-and how- and which skills you will circumvent with adaptations.

DOMAIN: Vocational
ENVIRONMENT: Kentucky Fried Chicken
SUBENVIRONMENT: Kitchen
SKILL: Preparing for work

\+ = correct
\- = incorrect

gp = gestural prompt
vp = verbal prompt
vc = verbal cue
si = self initiate

Nonhandicapped skills	Student inventory	Discrepancy analyses	Adaptation hypotheses
Enter kitchen	12/7 + 12/8 +		
Greet coworkers and supervisor	12/7 - 12/8 -	Did not initiate. Kept head down. Responded to greetings with "Hi."	Teach appropriate greetings and nonverbal behavior: --Good morning. --Hi, how are you?
Punch time clock	12/7 - 12/8 +	Some difficulty locating time card	Keep card in same slot each time.
Put on apron, cap, and plastic gloves	12/7 + 12/8 +		

DOMAIN: Vocational
ENVIRONMENT: Kentucky Fried Chicken
SUBENVIRONMENT: Kitchen
SKILL: Filling Macaroni Salad Cups

\+ = correct
\- = incorrect

gp = gestural prompt
vp = verbal prompt
vc = verbal cue
si = self initiate

Nonhandicapped Skills	Student Inventory	Discrepancy Analyses	Adaptation Hypotheses
Get plastic salad container from walk-in cooler	12/7 + 12/8 + (gp)	Had to provide gestural cue so student would pick up correct salad.	Have student learn to read labels or always keep salad in same place.
Get salad cups and lids from utility shelf	12/7 - 12/8 + (vc)		
Get large spoon from above sink	12/7 - 12/8 -	Student went to get spoon but couldn't reach it.	Have student get a chair to put in front of the sink so that he can reach a spoon
Get orange tray from utility shelf	12/7 + 12/8 - (gp)	Hard time determining which was the orange tray	Teach student to discriminate between the colors brown and orange
Get a pen from office	12/7 + 12/8 + (vp)		
Determine number of cups to be filled by looking at chart or asking cook	12/7 - 12/8 -	Student waited at work station for cook to come by	Teach student to initiate interaction with cook
Count out cups and lids	12/7 - (gp) 12/8 + (si)		
Put container of cups and lids back on shelf	12/7 + 12/8 +		

DOMAIN: Vocational

ENVIRONMENT: Kentucky Fried Chicken

SUBENVIRONMENT: Kitchen

SKILL: Filling Macaroni Salad Cups

+ = correct
- = incorrect

gp = gestural prompt
vp = verbal prompt
vc = verbal cue
si = self initiate

Nonhandicapped Skills	Student Inventory	Discrepancy Analyses	Adaptation Hypotheses
Write expiration date on bottom of cups (3 days from date filled)	12/7 + (gp) 12/8 + (c)	Student had to have month covered so he would only write the day.	Have student cover the month himself--then write down day
With spoon, fill cup to within 1/4 inch from top	12/7 - (gp) 12/8 + (si)		
Pack down gently with back of spoon	12/7 + (si) 12/8 +		
Place cup on counter	12/7 + 12/8 + (si)		
Fill remaining cups	12/7 + (vp) 12/8 +		
Place lids on cups	12/7 + (vc) 12/8 +		
Invert cup and place on tray	12/7 + (vp) 12/8 +		
Take tray to small cooler in boxing area	12/7 - (vp) 12/8 +		